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## COMMENT

### November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month Daughter fundraises to fight cancer that claimed dad's life

By Jeanine Gaw

My father, a longtime diabetic, was 68 years old when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, specifically mucinous cystadenocarcinoma of the pancreas. Dad was particularly lucky because the cancer hadn't metastasized, meaning he was eligible for an operation—the Whipple procedure.

It's a procedure only about 20 per cent of patients are eligible for. These are usually patients whose tumors are confined to the head of the pancreas and haven't spread into any nearby major blood vessels, the liver, lungs or abdominal cavity.

Those who undergo a successful Whipple procedure have a five-year survival rate of up to 25 per cent. Dad lived an additional seven years.

The Canadian Cancer Society reports that 4,800 people will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2015. Sadly, 4,600 people will die from the disease. It's the cancer with one of the poorest prognoses.

After one year of follow-up appointments, my father's oncologist said he wasn't worried about future cancer, but instead, was concerned about complications with the liver and other organs because of Dad's diabetes.

When Dad survived, it was like a breath of fresh



JEANINE GAW

air. You see the stats for pancreatic cancer and it's not very good. We were so surprised and we hoped for the best. Less than a decade later, in Dad's 75th year, he passed away of a heart attack.

As a mother of three, triplets age 17, I want to remember my father but also support pancreatic cancer research in Canada. So, I've registered for the one-day, 25-kilometre OneWalk to Conquer Cancer benefiting Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. The 2015 event raised over \$7.5 million.

This November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month. Already campaigning for the 2016 OneWalk, I have designated my funds raised to pancreatic cancer research at The Princess Margaret. I want the dollars I raise to go to a disease that takes so many lives each year and requires large amounts of funding to be researched and understood. We need better treatments and by raising money, we can help researchers find them!

Join me! Register and donate at [www.onewalk.ca](http://www.onewalk.ca). Remember: Tuesday, Dec. 1 is Giving Tuesday, the day to kickstart the season of charity giving.

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